

NEW ENGLAND PASTOR

"One interest will prevail . . . Christ our righteousness."

November/December 2008



THE PROMISE IS TO YOU. . .
Understanding the Work of the Holy Spirit

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New England Pastor is a bi-monthly magazine for pastors in New England, carrying forth the vision that Ellen White had for the area over a century ago: “I saw that when the message shall increase greatly in power, then the providence of God will open and prepare the way in the East for much more to be accomplished than can be at the present time” (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 149,). It is free of charge to those who pastor in New England. For all those living outside of New England who would like to subscribe, please call or email us.

Thanks!

I just received in the mail today the first issue of *New England Pastor*. Congratulations, it looks great and reads even better. I read the whole thing already and enjoyed every bit of it. Thanks for yours and your dad's vision. I'm looking forward to future issues. I really appreciate the Christ centered message.

—Greg Carlson, South Burlington, Vermont

Your publication gives me another reason to praise God and glorify His name. Thank you for such heartwarming, uplifting and encouraging messages of God and His love.

—Scott Sassone, Lancaster, Massachusetts

Received your May/June edition and loved it, and I am not even a pastor!

—Bob MacDougall, Bradenton, Florida

Thank you for your publication *New England Pastor*. I have read each one with delight, thankful for the beautiful illustration of how fathers and sons can work together in the Lord's work. The Lord will bless your work together and use your little paper to win souls among pastors, SDA and otherwise. And of course laity will love such a paper; they will praise the Lord for this beautiful illustration of family togetherness.

—Robert Wieland, Meadow Vista, California

What Farmers Tell Us About the End of the World

I continue to wrestle with the tension that Herb Douglass articulated in his piece "What Farmers Tell Us About the End of the World" in your May/June issue. That the divine Farmer waits for a harvestable crop is clear enough from the NT metaphor. But I'm not sure I'm ready to conclude, as Douglass does, that the Matthew 24 signs are therefore essentially immaterial, since they've gone on and on throughout history—and that rather than

anticipating further external readiness (signs), we need to be concentrating on internal readiness. We all agree that people that become focused on their own state of readiness are easily trapped in legalism with the bonus of a judgmental spirit towards all others not as ready as they.

I look at the segments within our community of faith where the "harvest" focus on demonstrable behavioral change has been embraced for years (even decades)—and I wonder: Are their present behaviors the sort of fruitage and change that God is waiting for from the rest of the church? Why isn't the work "finished" among them then? And if the work isn't "finished" among them yet either, then shall we conclude that the only reality God is waiting for is a harvestable church? Or should we recognize that while the absence of corporate "ripened grain" is one element of the divine patience/delay, there are other significant factors (some known, and others unknown to us) that are part of God's sovereign decision regarding "times and seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (Acts 1:7)? God's passion/compassion for the lost, his commitment to let the great controversy play out to its bitter end to ensure the universe will never return to such tragedy, his love for 1.4 billion Muslims, etc.—could these be additional reasons God waits?

Is the Bridegroom delayed? Most certainly. Has the lack of readiness on my part and on the part of the church I love and serve contributed to that delay? Without a doubt. But is the harvest principle the sole or overriding explanation for both the delay and the solution to that delay? I'm not certain that it is.

—Dwight K. Nelson, Berrien Springs, Michigan

"The Lord is Coming. Are You Ready?"

Shawn Brace's editorial, "The Lord is Coming. Are You Ready?" in the July/August edition reviewed an important question. My first district in ministry I became friends with an Assembly of God minister who would once-a-week hang a sign on his office door stating, "The pastor has gone fishing." This meant he was in the downtown area walking the sidewalks asking people the question, "If

you died tonight, do you know where you would be tomorrow?" On the "uh-oh, I'm in trouble" scale, this question is much higher than the question, "Are you ready?" I guess my question is, how much further out of someone's face or how much more politically correct should we be? Is this penetrating question really "wagging a stick?" It seems to me that "Jesus is coming, are you ready?" is the attitude that Revelation and, therefore, the Bible, ends with.

—Micheal Goetz, Hatboro, Pennsylvania

The In-Christ Motif

A comment about Clinton Baldwin's article on the in-Christ motif (March/April). He has some good thoughts and comes ever so close to striking the right chord. There is the statement: "Without the subjective experience of being in Christ, God would be obligated to save everyone irrespective of his or her attitude towards Him." This leaves the impression that God's attitude needs to be changed regarding saving everyone. He has elected everyone in Christ to be saved, but so many hinder the gift. He doesn't force it upon them.

Another statement: "As long as we are in this sinful body, it means that God's doing in us, is incomplete, imperfect, and mingled with our human frailties." This leads one to believe that the author doesn't believe the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, that Christian character perfection in sinful flesh is an impossibility. However, we know Christ disproved that. And He gives this gift to all.

—Paul Penno, Vallejo, California

Letters Policy

New England Pastor welcomes and encourages your letters, with the reminder that the inclusion of a letter in this section does not mean that the opinions and ideas necessarily reflect the views of the editors. Letters will be edited for space and clarity. Send correspondence to New England Pastor, PO Box 185, Warner, NH 03278 or newenglandpastor@gmail.com.



Christless Adventists?

by Shawn Brace

There are many who would like us to believe that Adventists have doctrine and prophecy, while Evangelicals have Jesus. I had a seminary professor who candidly admitted something along these lines during one of our classes. And inherent in this widely held opinion is that it is the job of these other churches and denominations to introduce people to Christ, and then we, as Adventists, can come along afterwards and “indoctrinate” them. Or, perhaps we should just abandon our “distinctives” altogether and preach the “essential” truths of Christianity, not worrying about the minutia of Adventism.

Is this an accurate idea, though?

Admittedly, some of our preaching and doctrine is Christless (“dry as the hills of Gilboa” Ellen White would say) and even some of our preaching about Christ is Christless. I am, in no way, immune from such unfortunate preaching. But I have always been a little uneasy when people insist that the megachurches and other Evangelical denominations have Christ, and we don’t.¹

Can a church really have Christ if they don’t have doctrine, or prophecy, for that matter? To begin with, this follows the assumption that doctrine and prophecy are exclusive from Christ.

It’s not an either/or situation, though. While Adventism may get caught up in preaching Christless doctrine at times, what we need to do is find Christ in the doctrines. Indeed, if you preach or teach the Sabbath, the Sanctuary, the Second Coming or any of our other 28 Fundamental beliefs, and Christ is not at the center of them, then

it’s not true doctrine.

I would argue, on the other hand, that these other churches aren’t preaching a complete picture of Christ. They’re preaching a version of Christ that is devoid of His fullness. Much of it is medication that doesn’t truly heal the sin-sick soul. We don’t need to go to these other churches to learn about Christ. He is among us.

If people are struggling in their walk with Christ, they don’t need less Sabbath; they need more. They need to understand that Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath who bids them to come to Him and find rest for their souls.

If people are discouraged about their faith experience, they don’t need less sanctuary; they need more. They need to understand that Christ was the Lamb slain for them; that He is standing at the right hand of the Father right now, interceding for them; that He not only promises forgiveness, but cleansing.

If people are tired of their Christian walk, they don’t need less 2300 days; they need more. They need to understand that Jesus is now at the other end of those 2300 days, cleansing the sanctuary in heaven, as well as the one in their hearts, and He is eager to return.

If people are struggling with their faith, they don’t need less Ellen White; they need more. They need to understand that because Christ loves us so much and shed His blood on Calvary, He, because of His mercy, gave us a special message from His heart in these last days, to help us in our times of need and struggle and guide us through the stormy weather and the rocky terrain.

Although someone can certainly accuse me of taking a verse out of

context or spiritualizing it, when the disciples came to Jesus in Matthew 14 and said that they were going to send the 5,000 into the villages to get something to eat, Jesus’ response says a lot. He told them, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” And what did they get for their hungry stomachs? They got Jesus, the Bread of Life.

Do we, as Adventists, have to send people to these other places to give them a taste of Jesus, or can we provide Him for them? Jesus tells us, “You give them something to eat.”²

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev 14:12).

¹ For an excellent recent article on this topic, see Shane Anderson, “It Really Is All About Jesus,” *Adventist Review*, 15 May 2008, 8-11. Also available online at <http://adventistreview.org/issue.php?issue=2008-1514&page=8> (accessed 11 November 2008).

² This is not to say that we cannot learn anything from these other churches and leaders. I, myself, do a lot of reading from non-Adventist authors. But there is a difference between gleaning pearls of wisdom from these people, and abandoning all Adventist doctrine and modeling our methods and doctrines after them.

Shawn Brace pastors four congregations in New Hampshire and Vermont. His first book, *Waiting at the Altar*, was recently published by TEACH Services. He and his wife, Camille, live in Warner, New Hampshire, and they enjoy anything involving the outdoors. They are expecting their first child in May.



“The Promise is to You. . .” by Barry Kimbrough

“The Seventh Day people,” wrote R.A. Torrey of Adventists in

1899, “are a conscientious, zealous, self-sacrificing people, but there is among them a most noticeable lack of Holy Ghost joyousness, freedom and power.”¹ The credibility of the author adds weight to his sobering words. Brother Torrey (1856-1928) was a great Christian evangelist and Bible scholar, an associate of D.L. Moody, and was known for his evangelistic preaching tours around the world. One of his notable books was *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*. He reasoned, in effect, “These people lack the power; therefore, they must be wrong about the Sabbath.” We are tempted to reason in a similar way, suggesting, “He lacked the Sabbath, therefore he must be wrong about the Holy Spirit.” But while we may want to dismiss his opinion, we find many statements by Ellen White that confirm it.²

Why such a problem among

For example, we often speak of the “latter rain” as a future outpouring of the Spirit on the church. We rightly say it will be a second Pentecost, like the first one in the book of Acts, and this will prepare us for the Second Coming. So we look forward . . . and back. But the resulting impression is that special blessings of spiritual power are not for today; instead, they were only for the privileged few who were fortunate enough to be present for the event recorded in Acts 2, or reserved for that holy number who will live just before Christ returns.³

A more subtle form of this idea is found in the popular concept that the Holy Spirit is given automatically at baptism; but this too is in the past for all baptized church members. We like to quote Peter’s words in Acts 2:38 to prove this point: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”⁴ At first glance it appears that Peter equates baptism with reception of the gift of the Spirit, but a closer look shows this

This fact of the subsequent blessing of the Spirit is proved twice over in the account of Paul’s meeting with the Ephesian brethren in Acts 19. Troubled by their small number, Paul asked, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They replied that they had “not heard whether there is a Spirit” (v. 2). This answer was probably their way of saying that they did not know this was the time of the Spirit. Ancient Jews believed the Spirit had been withdrawn by God during the 400 years of darkness after the last Old Testament prophetic messages and that only in the distant future would the Spirit return. Obviously, this group of baptized disciples had not heard about the day of Pentecost. So Paul instructed them about salvation through Christ and His promise of the Spirit (v. 5). Then they were baptized a second time. After this, Paul laid hands on them and “the Holy Spirit came upon them” (v. 6). The spiritual empowerment was not considered automatic, but it followed their second baptism. Several other passages in Acts show this distinction between water and Spirit baptism.⁵

It is a doorway into this new realm of experience. It is a magnifying glass that helps us see more clearly the wonderful truths about God

Adventists? We could point to a number of possible reasons, such as our historical focus on the Sabbath and other doctrines, our slowness to learn that the Holy Spirit is indeed a Person, or just plain human weakness and preoccupation with the mundane.

Each of these reasons may have validity, but I suggest that we actually have a theological barrier. Our ideas about the Spirit have caused us to place His work in the past or future, not in the here-and-now.

to be a wrong interpretation. Peter said repentance comes first. This is indeed a work of the Spirit, but it is not the same as the gift of the Spirit; that gift—according to Peter—comes after faith and baptism. This heavenly endowment is a subsequent divine operation on the soul, an addition, to a believer. It happens after conversion. Yet we have taught people to believe that they received the Spirit at baptism or before, on the basis of a text that does not even say this.

Some object to this view because they don’t find Paul teaching this step-by-step sequence in his epistles. *Only in Acts is this order described*, they say, *and this is not the norm. It was exceptional because it happened when the church was inaugurated*. Then they ask questions like this: *Can you find anywhere in Corinthians where Paul exhorts them to be baptized with the Spirit?*

The answer is simple. The Corinthians were not urged to be baptized in the Spirit

because they were already thus baptized!⁶ Chapters 12-14 were given to correct excesses that had developed as a result of their previous reception of the second blessing of the Spirit.

We need what the Corinthians had, without their mistaken extras; but we will never ask for what we think belongs only to others. Nor will we ask for something we think we already have by virtue of a long-since-passed baptismal tank ritual. God wants to give us this rich gift, but if we are blind to that we will never receive in fullness.

Our greatest mistake concerning this blessing, however, is not about timing. It is about purpose. Because the Spirit is an agent of change in our lives, we have concentrated on this to the neglect of the greatest reason given by our Lord. The gift of the Spirit is not about us at all. It is about Jesus. And telling the world of Him. Acts 1:8 says, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be *witnesses to Me* in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (emphasis supplied). The second blessing of the Spirit implants within us a great desire to tell others about Christ. It is a doorway into this new realm of experience. It is a magnifying glass that helps us see more clearly the wonderful truths about God—truths we may have known before but did not appreciate fully; and, most importantly, it is an empowerment to witness these truths to others. Nearly every passage that describes the outpouring of the Spirit connects it to verbal witness.⁷

A Spiritless Christian is weak, defeated, and has no message for the world. Such a person is like a sailboat without sails. Imagine the beautiful *Mayflower*, about to set out for America. How far would it have gotten by oars alone? Not very. But the crew knew the power of the wind. They threw up the sails. In two months the 60-ton ship had crossed the Atlantic, arriving at Provincetown on Nov. 21, 1620.

The gift of the Spirit is not about us at all. It is about Jesus. And telling the world of Him.

We have an even greater journey. We seek a better land and bring news of a greater King. As we make this trip, let’s throw out the sails of faith and hope and prayer. The Spirit of God, filling our sails, will provide the energizing force. Joy, freedom, and power will charge through us as never before. And the world will know that God is with us.

- 1 R.A. Torrey, “*Ought Christians to Keep the Sabbath?*” (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1899), p. 39.
- 2 Notice, for example, the following statements. 1890: “As a people, we have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa that had neither dew nor rain.” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, March 11, 1890. 1896: “Have you not been afraid of the Holy Spirit?” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1943), 363. 1902: “Two nights ago, I awoke at ten o’clock, heavily burdened in regard to the lack of the Holy Spirit’s work among our people.” *Selected Messages*, vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1980), pp. 201-202. 1904: “The promise of the Spirit is a matter little thought of; and the result is only what might be expected,—spiritual drought, spiritual

darkness, spiritual declension and death. Minor matters occupy the attention, and the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude.” *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8 (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1948), 21.

- 3 See Idem., *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1970), 701: “The descent of the Holy Spirit is looked forward to as in the future; but it is privilege of the church to have it now. Seek for it, believe for it, pray for it. We must have it, and heaven is waiting to bestow it.”
- 4 All texts are from the *New King James Version*.
- 5 Acts 8:14-17; 9:17, 18; such passages as Acts 10:44-48 show that some received the Spirit before baptism, but again this shows that water baptism and Spirit baptism are distinct and separate events.
- 6 See 1 Cor 1:7, “You come short in no gift,” and 1 Cor 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jew or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”
- 7 See, for example, 1 Sam 10:6, “Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will *prophesy* with them and be turned into another man.” 1 Sam 10:10, “Then the Spirit came upon him, and he *prophesied* among them.” Joel 2:28: “And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall *prophesy*.” Acts 4:31, “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they *spoke the word of God with boldness*.” Other texts that connect Spirit baptism with witness include Acts 1:8; 4:8; 10:44-46; 19:6.

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The Investigative Judgment: Is it Biblical? Part Two

by Herbert E. Douglass

This article is Part 2. Part 1 was in the September/October 2008 issue, also available at www.newenglandpastor.com.

—Editors

Many good books have been written on the significance of 1844 as the terminal date for the majestic time prophecy of Daniel 8:14.¹ Our concern here is to focus on what has been going on in heaven since 1844.

From the standpoint of angels, some kind of investigative judgment must occur before Jesus comes. Once Jesus resurrects the sleeping saints the angels will obviously know how to link up families and which ones to gather for the trip to Heaven.²

From the standpoint of people on earth, some kind of examination should be going on in their lives. If ever we take Paul's advice it should be now: "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves" (2 Corinthians 13:5). And Peter's counsel: "Therefore brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble" (2 Peter 1:10). And Ellen White's encouragement: "Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven . . . there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing."³

From the standpoint of God in heaven, another kind of investigative judgment

must occur before Jesus comes. The first angel of Revelation 14 announced "the hour of *His judgment* has come" (v. 7, italics supplied).

What could the angel mean? Yes, the time would come, prior to the Advent, *when God permits Himself to be placed on trial!* Can we imagine greater love or humility than this—that the Creator of the universe should put Himself in the dock and have the entire universe judge whether He has been fair, just, and merciful in His dealings with sinners?

John tells us how this "trial" turns out. The judgment of the universe is: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints" (Revelation 15:3); "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments" (Revelation 19:1, 2). But what kind of trial did God go through before He was accorded this magnificent acquittal?

Throughout the Bible God has made it clear that He is interested in character, not mere words or even acts that are only a pretense of full commitment.

Keep Eyes on the Big Picture

We must keep our eyes on the big picture. Whatever else we may learn about the pre-advent, investigative judgment, the primary focus is on how this remarkable event vindicates God's side of His controversy with Satan. This is done with a double emphasis:

The eyes of the universe are on God's judgment as to whom He says are safe to save. Our Lord's evidence will be endorsed by onlooking angels and beings on other inhabited worlds.

The eyes of the universe will see the consequences of rebellion in final display, ending with the din and crash of the seven last plagues. Satan's argument from the beginning has been that God intimidates, that He asks for the impossible from created beings, and thus He is unfair in the way He runs the universe. And now it is showdown time!⁴

C. S. Lewis noted that "ancient man approached God (or even the gods) as the accused person approaches his judge. For the modern man the roles are reversed. He is the judge: God is in the dock. . . . Man is on the Bench and God in the Dock."⁵ If Lewis could have seen the bigger picture, he would see how his insights would have taken on universal proportions. In a very real sense, during the investigative judgment, God indeed is in the dock, as we shall now see.

This emphasis on the big picture—final vindication of God's justice, patience, and loving wisdom—is foretold in Daniel and Ezekiel, and amplified in Revelation.

In Daniel 7: 9-27, we trace the prophet's grand vision of the court session in heaven prior to the end of the last days. This overview of a court session

wherein the Son of man, symbolically depicted, enters a new phase of our Lord's mediatorial work is not describing Christ's second advent.⁶ (No reference is made to the symbolic "stone" of Daniel 2:44, 45 or to any other indication that Daniel is referring to the first resurrection or to the end of this world as we now know it.) This court scene is describing the events begun on October 22, 1844.⁷

The investigative judgment is not necessary to inform an all-wise God who are eligible to live forever. He certainly knows what has been written in "the books." But He wants every angel and every inhabitant of unfallen worlds to see the evidence, to make up their own mind as to whether Jesus is fair when He makes up His kingdom.

Whose names are in "the books [that] were opened" (Daniel 7:10) leading to the "judgment . . . made in favor of the saints" (Daniel 7:22)? These books, called the Book of Life (Revelation 20:12), contain the names of "all those who have ever entered the service of God."⁸ (The names of sinners who have never responded to God's entreaties, who have never asked for His pardon and power, are not recorded in the Book of Life.)

Why are "Books" Opened?

Again, "the books" are opened in the pre-advent judgment for two special reasons:

To give angels and created beings in unfallen worlds an opportunity to review God's judgments "made in favor of the saints of the Most High" (after all, they are really interested in who their eternal neighbors will be).

To prepare the angels for those who will be raised in the first resurrection (Matthew 24:31; 25:31).

Throughout the Bible God has made it clear that He is interested in character, not mere words or even acts that are only a pretense of full commitment. On different occasions, Jesus spoke of those who profess

loyalty but who did not practice their profession. He likened them to the foolish that built on sand (Matthew 7:26), to tares who at first looked like wheat but were more fully revealed in the harvest (Matthew 13:30), to the five foolish bridesmaids (Matthew 25:10), to the lazy servant entrusted with talent (Matthew 25:30), and to "goats" (Matthew 25:46).

All these representations of those who had once professed loyalty to God had their names in "the books" (probably considered "members in good and regular standing" in their local churches!), but their characters did not reflect what they "believed." During the investigative judgment, their life records are reviewed and found wanting. Their names are "blotted out . . . from the Book of Life" (Revelation 3:5).

Daniel wrote about other matters that will be accomplished during the time of the investigative judgment. In some magnificent way, the universe will be cleansed from all the lies and misrepresentations that Satan has heaped upon God, on the one hand, and on God's people, on the other. God's final witness to the power of the Gospel (Matthew 24:14; Romans 1:16) will be manifested through those whose neural patterns are cleansed of desires and habits that once were in contradiction to God's will.

In Part Three we will focus on the three nuances that translators have employed in Daniel 8:14—"to set right," "to cleanse," and "to vindicate."

- 1 See Roy Gane, *Altar Call* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Diadem, 1999); Frank Holbrook, *The Atoning Priesthood of Jesus Christ* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1996); Arnold V. Wallenkampf, Richard Leshner, Frank B. Holbrook, editors, *The Sanctuary and the Atonement* (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 1989).
- 2 See Matt. 25:31 and 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17. Might there be a connection between the investigative judgment and Paul's insight in 1 Corinthians 4:9—"For we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men?"
- 3 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*

(Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1950), 425.

- 4 1 Corinthians 4:9—"spectacle [Lit. "theater"] to the world, both to angels and to men." That this planet is a stage for the universe to observe the interplay of good and evil and how every person since Adam has had his or her part to play in the drama—is an awesome thought. Imagine: "The Monarch of the universe and the myriads of heavenly angels are spectators . . . they are anxiously watching to see who will be successful overcomers, and win the crown of glory that fadeth not away." Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4 (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1948), 34. "The whole universe is looking with inexpressible interest to see the closing work of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. At such a time as this, just as the great work of judging the living is to begin, shall we allow unsanctified ambition to take possession of the heart." Idem., *Testimonies*, vol. 5 (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1948), 526.
- 5 C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans 1970), 244.
- 6 "The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of days in heaven to receive dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator." White, *The Great Controversy*, 480.
- 7 For the validity of October 22, 1844, see Siegfried Horn and Lynn Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7*, 2nd Edition (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1970); William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1982), pp. 132, 137; William H. Shea, "When Did the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9:24 Begin? *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1991.
- 8 White, *The Great Controversy*, 480.

Herbert E. Douglass, Th.D., is a theologian and retired college administrator. Born in Massachusetts, he was president of Atlantic Union College as well as an associate editor for the Adventist Review. A prolific writer, he has authored over 24 books, including God At Risk; Why Jesus Waits; A Fork in the Road, and Messenger of the Lord: the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White. He currently resides in Lincoln, California.



An exegetical reflection on 1 John 1:9 by Shawn Brace

When speaking about Christ's "unconditional" forgiveness, especially in light

of what He said on Calvary to the soldiers who gambled over His robe (Luke 23:34),¹ many people like to cite 1 John 1:9 as a classic example of conditional forgiveness. And, indeed, this text has been—and continues to be—a bit perplexing to me.

As many of us are well aware, the text reads, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (NKJV). Literally, in Greek, the passage could be translated: "If we would confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He may forgive us our sins, and He may cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This text is often cited as an example of what is called a "third class conditional clause" in Greek. In other words, it is a classic "if/then" statement and it denotes the condition as "uncertain of fulfillment, but still likely."² As someone has suggested in relation to this passage, "The moment he [the believer] confesses, God will forgive and cleanse. If the believer fulfills the protasis ["if"], then God will fulfill the apodosis ["then"]! If I do my part, God will do His part!"³

But I am not sure that this text is that cut-and-dried—and that last explanation seems to place God in the respondent's chair, and us in the initiator's chair, which is nothing more than a pagan, merit-based system of salvation. To begin with, what is the apodosis (the "then" part) of the statement? Is it God's faithfulness/righteousness, or His forgiveness and cleansing? Structurally, it would seem as though God's faithfulness and righteousness are the "then" part of the statement, with the Greek word *eimi* ("is") as the immediately subsequent verb to the conditional "if" statement.

But this interpretation presents

clear theological challenges. Are God's faithfulness and righteousness dependent upon my confession of sin? Is God not faithful and righteous independent of anything I do? Does He not send His rain on the just and the unjust, His sun on the righteous and the unrighteous (see Matt 5:45)? Indeed, the Greek word *eimi* is not in the future tense; John does not write that if we confess our sins, God "will be faithful." He writes that God "is" presently and actively faithful.

I am convinced that God's faithfulness, righteousness, forgiveness, comfort, and advocacy are not so much dependent upon what I do, but upon who He is.

Of course, many could then suppose that God's forgiveness and cleansing are the "then" part of the statement. But it seems to me that the Greek word *hina*—which literally means "so that" or "in order that"—indicates that God's faithfulness and righteousness make His forgiveness and cleansing possible, not our confession. This passage shows that God's forgiveness is dependent upon *His* faithfulness, not ours.

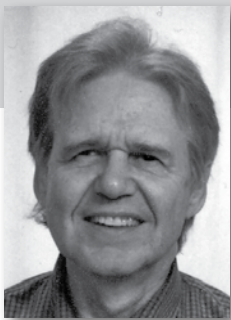
What further muddies the waters is the first verse of the next chapter. After John writes that He wishes none of His readers would sin, he then apparently shares another third class conditional

clause when he writes, "And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." You can clearly see the limitations of this passage as well! Certainly, God doesn't act as an advocate (the Greek word is *parakletos*, which is often translated as "comforter" when describing the Holy Spirit. It literally means "one who is called alongside") alongside God, only when we sin! His role as mediator, comforter, and advocate stands independent of our actions. Does it not?

Thus, I'm not sure that the classification of third class conditional clauses is really as easily interpreted as some would like us to believe. And I am convinced that God's faithfulness, righteousness, forgiveness, comfort, and advocacy are not so much dependent upon what I do, but upon who He is.

- 1 Cf. Ellen G. White, *The Desires of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1940), 745: "That prayer of Christ for His enemies embraced the world. It took in every sinner that had lived or should live, from the beginning of the world to the end of time. Upon all rests the guilt of crucifying the Son of God. To all, forgiveness is freely offered."
- 2 Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996), 696.
- 3 See <http://www.middletownbiblechurch.org/egreek/egreek07.htm> (accessed 4 November 2008).

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The Meaning of the Title “Christ” by Rollin Shoemaker

Let us
take a look
at Mark
8:27-33:

After Jesus
and His disciples
left the place
where they were,

they traveled into the villages of Caesarea Philippi. While they were traveling along, Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do people think I am?” The disciples responded by saying, some say You are John the Baptist, others say You are Elijah, still others say You are one of the prophets. Jesus then asked His disciples, “Who do you think I am?” Peter responded by saying, “You are the Christ!” Then Jesus commanded His disciples not to tell anyone anything about this.

Jesus then began to tell His disciples that it was necessary for the Son of Man to suffer greatly; to be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and the lawyers (scribes); to be killed and then after three days to be resurrected from the dead. Jesus was speaking openly about this to His disciples. Peter thereupon took hold of Jesus and began to correct Him. Jesus turned around and looked directly at Peter and rebuked His disciple, “Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking the thoughts of human beings not the thoughts of God!”¹

This is a rather interesting passage in that there are two views of the Christ portrayed here. They both have their origin in the Hebrew Bible. “Christ” is a transliteration of the Greek word *Christos* which is a verbal adjective with the sense of a perfect passive participle,² which means that someone is anointed by somebody. *Christos* is a translation of the Hebrew word for anointing—*māšah*. *Māšah*, when transliterated, becomes our word *messiah*.³ Thus, when a person is anointed by God, he becomes God’s messiah (i.e., God’s anointed). The anointed person of God is endowed with the Spirit. He becomes the

representative of God to the people and the people to God. He is like a prophet, priest, or the man of God. He stands between the people and God to do God’s will.⁴ When Saul was anointed by God by the hand of Samuel, he was anointed to not only lead the people of God but to also deliver God’s people from the yoke of the Philistines (1 Sam 9ff). When Saul faltered from God’s plan, God chose David, who was also anointed by God by the hand of Samuel (1 Sam 16:13). David eventually reigned as king in Saul’s place. David did deliver the people from the yoke of bondage. God promised David that he would have a descendent that would sit on his throne forever. This descendent was thought to be God’s Messiah (*māšah yhwh*).⁵

Cyrus was one of God’s messiahs. He was God’s anointed. He delivered Israel from the Babylonian yoke. Isaiah 45:1 reads: “Thus says the Lord to Cyrus, His anointed, whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him, and to loose the loins of kings; to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut” (NASB). Since Cyrus broke the yoke of bondage over the children of Israel, it allowed God’s people to return to the promised land, to Jerusalem. Moses too could probably be considered in this category since he was God’s person to lead the children of Israel out from underneath the Egyptian bondage to Mount Sinai where they were formulated into a nation.

Peter, being aware of these incidents and others as well, could very easily have thought that God’s anointed, His Christ, would be the one to break the Roman yoke of bondage, which was at that time burdening the people of God. All the disciples undoubtedly believed the messiah would free them from Roman bondage as latter events showed. The Zealots⁶ were dedicated to the task of getting rid of the Roman yoke. In fact, the rebellion against Rome that took place a few years later in AD 66-70, was the rebellion that was supposed to deliver the children of God from the Roman yoke. Instead the rebellion ended with the destruction of Jerusalem.

In 135 the Bar Kochba revolt against Rome took place. The Jews were using the pattern that originated when Jeremiah was a prophet. Jeremiah had told the Jews that their exile under Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon would last for 70 years (Jer 29:10ff.). Thus, Rabbi Aqiba and Bar Kochba thought that since almost 70 years had passed since Jerusalem was destroyed, the same thing would take place in their day. However, Rome squashed the Jewish rebellion and would not allow the Jews to observe Sabbath, observe “fasts and holy days, [and the] study of the Torah. [In fact the] Jews were forbidden even to enter the pagan city built on the site of ancient Jerusalem.”⁷

Jesus, of course, had a different view of what it meant to be God’s anointed. Luke records in Luke 4:18-19 a piece of Scripture which Jesus read and said was fulfilled that very day: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for His sake He anointed me, to preach good news to the poor, He sent me to preach release for those in captivity, to open the eyes of the blind, to free those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” Throughout the rest of the gospel, Luke records incident after incident of how this text was fulfilled. Jesus sees His mission as God’s anointed, that is as God’s Christ, as one who brings freedom, not necessarily from the Roman yoke but from the oppression which Satan had foisted upon the people. Luke writes a kind of summary statement of Jesus’ earthly ministry in Acts 10:38: “Jesus the one from Nazareth whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit and power went about doing good deeds and healing all those who were enslaved by the devil because God was with Him.” The essential task of Jesus as God’s anointed, as the Christ, was to free people who were enslaved by the devil.

Secondly, Jesus as God’s anointed was to free people from the power of Sin.⁸ Mark 10:45 reads: “In fact the Son of Man did not come to be ministered to but came to minister and to give His life [soul] as a ransom in place of the many [i.e., all people].” The expression “the many” means

all.⁹ Jesus was to ransom His life for the entire world. John 3:16-17 has the same idea expressed.

Thirdly, Jesus, as the Christ, by His resurrection broke the power of death over humanity. Thus Jesus' death-resurrection has become the means whereby the person who has died might live again. Paul in Romans 6 tells us that those who are baptized into His death will rise out of the baptismal water to live in newness of life (Rom 6:4). He also tells us that the power of Sin no longer rules over the person who is baptized into Christ (Rom 6:11). Then in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 we read: "We have this word from the Lord: we who live unto the coming of the Lord will not precede or go before those who have fallen asleep. The Lord Himself with the voice of the archangel, with the trumpet of God, shall descend from heaven and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are still living will be caught up at the very same moment to meet the Lord in the air." Hence, all who die in Christ will live again. God's anointed, the Christ, has overcome the power of death and made it possible for the dead to be resurrected and live eternally.

Fourthly, Jesus' idea of the Christ was different from the disciples' idea even after His resurrection. After His resurrection, the disciples still thought that there would be a kingdom or nation here on earth that would be composed of God's people. In Acts 1:6: "When all the disciples were together they asked Jesus. 'Lord, are you at this time going to establish the kingdom or nation of Israel?'" They were not clear on Jesus' mission as the Christ. John 18:36 is Jesus' response to Pilate when Jesus Himself was asked whether or not He was a king. Jesus says, "My kingdom is not the same kind of kingdom that is in this world. If it were, my servants would fight." Jesus had predicted that in spite of His kingdom not being the kind that Rome represented, the religious and political leaders of His people would reject Him. He predicted His death and the events that took place when He was crucified. He also predicted His resurrection three days later. Jesus and His disciples were surely out of step with one another. They had two different understandings of what was meant by the title Christ. The disciples

were thinking like human beings. They were living through their human propensity of brute political power and dominion over one's enemies. It was not until after Jesus' resurrection that the disciples began ever so slowly to comprehend the true meaning of the title Christ.

The title "Christ," as used by Jesus, meant that Jesus, as the Christ, God's anointed, stands between God and humanity. He is the one who is anointed by God to do God's bidding. God's bidding was that Jesus' crucifixion would be the means of salvation. Jesus was anointed by God to deliver God's people from Sin and death, to free Jews and non-Jews to serve God with the promise of life everlasting.

In our day, since the thoughts of human beings because of human propensity are thoughts of power, dominion, and control, we too could misconstrue prophecy. In Revelation 17:14, which reads: "These [the Lamb's enemies] will make war with the Lamb and the Lamb will conquer them, because He is Lord of lords, and King of kings and those with the Lamb are called by God, chosen by God, and faithful believers," we perhaps could misconstrue this text and think that we will pick up arms and fight in the name of God. In fact, Christians were guilty of taking up arms in the Crusades in the Middle Ages to fight for God and were responsible for the deaths of millions who did not kowtow to their beliefs.¹⁰ That is not how God works. The thoughts of God are not like the thoughts of human beings. For you see, it is the Lamb, who is God's anointed, God's Christ, who conquers the devil, Satan, Sin, and yes, even death. The Lamb has conquered through His love for us—His rebellious enemies—by His death-resurrection (Rom 5:8-11). It is not by our political might or power. It is by washing our soiled robes in the blood of the Lamb that victory comes. As Revelation 7:14 says, "Believers washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Sin, death, Satan and all of his minions are conquered through the blood of the Lamb. "They [the believers] conquered him [the accuser of our brethren] on account of the blood of the Lamb and on account of the word of their [the believers'] testimony" (Rev 12:11).

The title "Christ," as understood by Jesus, is the Christ that we truly want, for He is the Messiah who conquers Sin by becoming Sin (2 Cor 5:21). He is the crucified One who rescues us out of this present evil age (Gal 1:4). He has become *the* descendent of David who will reign on David's throne forever and ever. He lives in the realm of power (Rom 1:4). He is the One before whom the entire universe will bow and proclaim as Lord (Phil 2:9-11). Thus, it is fitting to call Him Christ Jesus, our Lord.

- 1 All translations are the author's except where noted.
- 2 See Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1974; reprint, 9th printing 1974), §358.2.b., 107.
- 3 Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 99.
- 4 Franz Hesse, "xpiw, kta" *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 498-499.
- 5 Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 28-29, 52-53, 55-56, *passim*.
- 6 See Roland H. Bainton, *Christendom: A Short History of Christianity and Its Impact on Western Civilization: From the Birth of Christ to the Reformation*, vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 35.
- 7 Frederick A. Norwood, *Strangers and Exiles: A History of Religious Refugees*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdom Press, 1969), 141-142.
- 8 Martyn capitalizes the word "Sin" when it means an anti-God power or when it is a community-destroying cosmic power. We capitalize it for the same reason. See J. Louis Martyn, "The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians," *Int* 54 (2000): 257; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, SP, vol. 9 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 95.
- 9 See Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ed. Gordon D. Fee, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 336.
- 10 See Norwood, 158-171.

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When Did Self-Love Manage to Become the Same Thing as Love?

by Carsten Johnsen

I must here mention a phenomenon which I notice popping up in otherwise quite

conservative Christian literature.¹ A given word may for ages have had a negative sense. And then suddenly it begins to mean something definitely positive. Is that a good sign?

There seems to be, in this age of skepticism and confusion, the strange idea that what is straight can, all by itself, suddenly turn crooked, and that the reason for this crookedness is already inherent in the original thing's deepest nature.

The Bible seems to have a different idea. The Psalmist says that God has made all things straight. It is man, the creature, who takes many a crooked turn.

In our particular case, we may ask: Is God Himself unable to keep Agape and Eros apart? Expressed differently: Is love bound to intermingle with self-love? Can it even *turn into* self-love, and vice versa? This question is not an entirely irrelevant one at the present time. For some of our theologians have evidently drunk so deeply from the cisterns of wisdom of contemporary humanist psychology that they keep echoing a strange phrase, torn loose from all sensible contexts:

"In order to love others, man must first learn to love himself." And Christian heralds of this idea even produce Bible texts in support of their statement: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*."

Accordingly, it is entirely legitimate and good to love oneself. Yes, but the legitimacy and the goodness of this proposition depend entirely on one condition: You must have your context straight. You must have that context clear in your own mind, and you must

make it thoroughly clear to those other ones whom you are exposing to a deadly danger if you simply say: "It is legitimate and good to love oneself," without providing any desperately needed modification to go along with your sweeping statement. What your interlocutor gathers from your word of wisdom *may* be a useful truth that enhances life. It may also be a fatal falsehood that destroys his life.

The common trend of our humanistic environment is to leave those phrases dangling in the air like that, without any modifying addition whatsoever. Nothing could be more catastrophic to the clear distinction between Agape and Eros. Man's most urgent need, however, is to know exactly *in what sense*, or *under what circumstances*, it is perfectly legitimate and perfectly beneficial to "love oneself."

Most propounders of that fascinating idea seem to assume—probably because their humanist-inspired authority in the field of religious psychology has foolishly suggested it to them—that there is something, somewhere, in the deepest recesses of yourself that is still good, some basic fund on which you can draw for a gradual development toward the better. This "intuition" is the most satanic delusion that has ever haunted mankind. The Bible is radically opposed to humanist philosophy on that particular point. Did you ever hear some person state about a fellow man: "After all, he is good at the bottom." That is probably a most well-meaning phrase on his part. But, on the devil's part, it is the most insidious lie ever invented. Up to a certain point, Nygren² is perfectly right: Man, in himself, is absolutely valueless, or even a thousand times worse. He is through and through depraved, a real precipice of depravity, as Luther said. So, on that score there certainly is no intelligent reason for you

and me to *love ourselves*, or to have such a profound *respect for ourselves*, as the humanist phrase goes.

No, no! Every time we are tempted to think along those lines, we must shake ourselves awake, realizing that there is something here which we have tragically failed to point out in the core of our thought and expression. To omit it is to forget it, and to suffer others to remain ignorant about it may be to the loss of their souls.

For nothing in the world must we make the terrible mistake of loving ourselves, what we have in ourselves *apart from our God*. It is in Him exclusively we have our values, every single one of them. The only intelligent reason according to which we are entitled to "love ourselves," or "respect ourselves," is the historic fact that *the Lord has created us*. That is a tremendous merit. But notice: it is not our merit; it is entirely Christ's.

The conclusion—if you are intelligent enough to draw it—is a sobering one: Any Christian is—in himself—exactly as bad as the non-Christian. And the non-Christian is exactly as good as the Christian. By virtue of what fact? By virtue of the fact that he was *created by Christ*, exactly the same way the Christian was. It is the Spirit of God who is in the process of creating good things in both of them all the time.

By foolish men, this too is misunderstood as "inherent merit" on man's part. That is another case of self-deception, sheer illusion. A cruel type of disillusion is bound to happen to that human being on the day Jesus has predicted, when the Holy Ghost is to be gradually withdrawn from the last (lost) generation. Then it will be discovered—by humanists and by any person who still possesses an ever so little bit of simple sense observation—what man really is, *in himself*. All "natural" goodness is gone,

including motherliness, fatherliness, and brotherliness: "The brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death" (Mark 13:12).

It will then finally have to be admitted what that "basic human goodness" of previous ages really consisted in. It was, all the time, nothing but the miracle of God, a process of active creation on the part of His Holy Spirit, going out to the entire world with healing under His wings.

Do you see how prone we are to draw the false conclusions, conclusions of the humanist kind? Why? Because we are humanists; for no other reason.

We have left out of our account the simple fact of a creating God. There seems to be some understandable reason, then, behind the fact that we are reminded in God's Holy Word, not just once or twice, but an endless number of times, that He is the Creator; we are the created ones.

- 1 This article is a chapter from the book, *Agape and Eros* (Yucaipa, Calif.: US Business Specialties, 1982), 106-110.
- 2 Anders Nygren was a Swedish theologian who wrote the two-volume work *Eros and Agape*. This work was the prevailing treatise on the Christian understanding of Agape and Eros love, which is still a definitive source

today among many theologians, pastors, and laypeople. Johnsen's book was a rebuttal to many of Nygren's claims.

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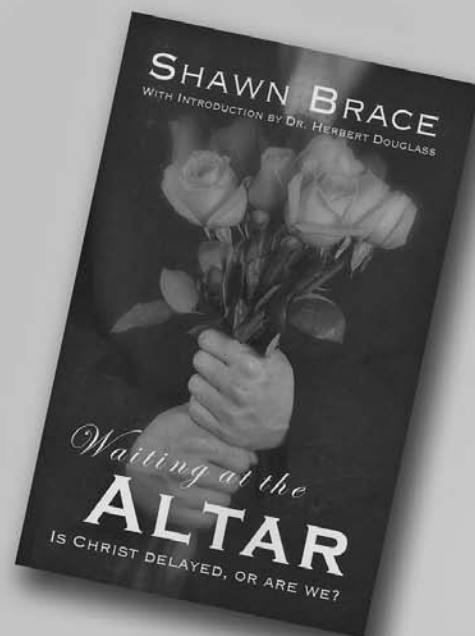
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Personal Reflections on the Incarnation

by Bill Brace



Quite frankly, the incarnation touches my heart and mind almost as much as does the stupendous event on the cross of Calvary. Maybe it's because I've had a soft spot in my heart for this time of year ever since I was a young boy growing up in the hinterlands of Eastern Canada. Christmas was always the highlight and most delightful time in our family calendar. Preparations, led by my father, brought with them plenty of excitement and anticipation as the weeks and days wound down and then finally culminated in the wonders of the early morning hours, before sunrise, mind you, on December 25. We were a poor family of six children but always seemed to be well provided for on that festive occasion. I now more fully appreciate the blood, sweat, and tears my mother and father put into the holiday to make it a special treat for all of us eager children.

And now that many decades have elapsed, and I have, perhaps, a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the real reason for the celebration, it has taken on a whole new wealth of significance for me. And, yes, I know, as do you, this is most likely *not* the time of Christ's birth in our annual calendar. However, the Saviour of our world *was born*; we do know that for sure! When, on occasion, I have my congregations sing carols in midsummer, it is a way of eliminating December as an exclusive time for such. The angels sang at His birth, and so may we—at any time of year.

The incarnation story, though, just continues to amaze me. The events and circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus are pure Hollywood. No, better than Hollywood; much, much better. The humble mother, the perplexed Joseph, the stable, the shepherds—all constitute part of a romantic setting that grows in our minds with each passing year. But, most of all, contemplation

of a truth that the mighty God, the Creator of the universe, humbled Himself and became one of us, has often brought tears to my eyes and a peace to my inner soul as nothing save the cross can do. I do believe, with certainty, the meaning of the cross is in the incarnation. They are, indeed, of the same stripe.

Moreover, Jesus reveals something wonderful about the Godhead through His incarnation two millennia previous to our time. Yes, most importantly, it seems to me anyway, we see the ultimate manifestation of the “going down” of divine agape in His becoming one with us. The infinite becomes finite. The thought, the fact, simply overwhelms me. It engulfs my entire being. And without reservation I remind you—it is to be the story and the study of eternity.

The apostle Paul announced the meaning of the birth with alacrity, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4, 5).¹

We can argue what meaning is intended by Paul's usage of the words “under the law,” “redeem,” and “adoption” in these modest verses, but we can never deny the fact that the apostle understood the infinite ramifications of the birth of His Saviour for all the inhabitants of planet earth. The Saviour of the world had come. He had come to make atonement, a work of restoration, for us poor, needy, and weakened sinners.

In so doing He took upon Himself our very nature and demonstrated what faith can accomplish through the much more abounding grace bestowed upon us. We see in Jesus the potential that lies in every soul, especially among those who have come to experience a heart appreciation of the gift's

enormous cost.

So, as you prepare sermons appropriate for the season, as you experience family get-togethers, as you contemplate the first advent in light of the second, may the inner joy it all prompts be a taste of what is yet to be. And may the words of the excited angels, those chosen to share with the surprised shepherds outside the parameters of Bethlehem that dark night, give you great happiness:

“Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace,
goodwill toward men!” (Luke 2:14)

The servant of the Lord, Ellen White, pictures the intended result of the incarnation this way: “And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift—Immanuel, ‘*God with us.*’”²

I make no apologies when I say the story never gets old. Indeed it prompts me to exclaim, “What a God!”

- 1 All scriptures are taken from the *New King James Version*.
- 2 Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1940), 26.

Bill Brace has been involved in urban ministry for over twenty-five years. He pastors Seventh-day Adventist congregations in Braintree and Norwood, Massachusetts. In addition, he maintains an active radio ministry. His program “Portraits of God” is currently heard on several stations around the United States. He and his wife, Melanie, live in Norfolk, Massachusetts, and they have three grown children, one son-in-law, a daughter-in-law, and a beautiful granddaughter.

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